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ANDRÉ BIROTTE JR.
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    United States Attorney
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11
    Attorneys for Plaintiff
12
    UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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14
                        UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
15
                  FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
16
    UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
                                       NO. CV **
17
              Plaintiff,
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                                               VERIFIED
                                       COMPLAINT FOR FORFEITURE
              v.
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    $132,322.00 IN U.S. CURRENCY,
                                     ) [21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6)]
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              Defendant.
                                              [D.E.A.]
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         The United States brings this claim against the defendant
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    $132,322.00 in U.S. currency (the "defendant currency"), and
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   alleges as follows:
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#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This is a civil forfeiture action brought pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6).

- 2. This court has jurisdiction over the matter under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1345 and 1355.
- 3. Venue lies in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1395(b).

### PERSONS AND ENTITIES

- 4. The plaintiff is the United States of America.
- 5. The defendant is \$132,322.00 in U.S. currency seized from Adolph Robert Thornton, Jr. ("Thornton") on February 23, 2011, at the Los Angeles International Airport ("LAX"), in Los Angeles, CA.
- 6. The interests of Thornton may be adversely affected by these proceedings.
- 7. Plaintiff alleges that the defendant currency represents or is traceable to moneys and negotiable instruments furnished or intended to be furnished in exchange for a controlled substance in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841 et seq, or were used or intended to be used to facilitate a violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841 et seq. As such, the defendant currency is subject to forfeiture pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6).
- 8. The defendant currency was seized in this district on or about February 23, 2011, by members of Group 3 of the Los Angeles International Airport Narcotics Task Force ("LAX Group 3"). The defendant currency is currently in the custody of the United States Marshals Service, where it shall remain subject to this court's jurisdiction during the pendency of this action.

#### EVIDENCE SUPPORTING FORFEITURE

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- On or about February 23, 2011, at about 11:45 a.m., Los Angeles Sheriff's Department ("LASD") Detective Moore and LASD Detective DeRuyter (the "detectives"), members of LAX Group 3, were on duty at LAX monitoring passengers exiting the automatic doors between the US Airways and Southwest Airlines baggage carousel area. The detectives observed a male (later identified as Thornton) carrying a single carry-on bag (the "carry-on bag") exit past the carousels. Detective Moore walked along side Thornton, identified himself as a police officer and asked Thornton from which city he was traveling. appeared nervous with his hands visibly shaking; Thornton paused and answered Memphis. Memphis is a known consumer location for narcotics and Los Angeles is a known source city where narcotics can be purchased. Detective Moore asked Thornton whether he (Thornton) was in town for business or pleasure. answered pleasure and that he (Thornton) was in Los Angeles to see his girlfriend who was supposed to pick Thornton up at the airport.
- 10. Detective Moore asked to see Thornton's identification. Thornton provided a drivers license with a hole punch covering the expiration year. When asked about the hole punch, Thornton stated that law enforcement in Memphis punched the hole in the license because Thornton had several outstanding traffic warrants. Detective Moore asked Thornton whether Thornton had ever been arrested and Thornton replied that he (Thornton) had been arrested for possession of a concealed firearm and cited for possession of marijuana.

- 12. When asked whether there was any additional money or any narcotics in the carry-on bag, Thornton assured the detectives that there was not and that nobody had given him (Thornton) anything to bring to Los Angeles.
- 13. Detective DeRuyter noticed a strong odor of marijuana emanating from the carry-on bag. When asked again if there was any currency or narcotics in the carry-on bag, Thornton assured the detectives that there was nothing but clothing in the carry-on bag.
- 14. Detective DeRuyter removed a tennis shoe from Thornton's carry-on bag and found a bundle of \$100 bills under the shoe's insole. Thornton stated that the shoe was his, but the money did not belong to him (Thornton). However, Thornton was unable to offer any explanation or reason why someone else would hide money in Thornton's shoe.
- 15. Thornton accompanied the detectives to the LAX Group 3 office so that the detectives could further examine the carry-on bag. The carry-on bag contained several other bundles of currency hidden inside various shoes within the bag. When asked how much money in total was in the carry-on bag, Thornton responded that there was about \$80,000.00 and that the money

belonged to him (Thornton). Thornton had no response when asked why he (Thornton) failed to tell the detectives about the additional currency when the detectives originally spoke with Thornton in the terminal. Likewise, Thornton did not have any explanation for why he (Thornton) initially told the detectives that the money Detective DeRuyter found in the insole of Thornton's shoe (referenced in paragraph 14) did not belong to him (Thornton).

- 16. When Thornton removed the shoes he (Thornton) was wearing, Detective Moore found two additional bundles of money underneath the shoes' insoles. Thornton also removed approximately \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 in U.S. currency from his pants pocket.
- 17. When asked why he (Thornton) was traveling with such a large amount of money, Thornton replied that he (Thornton) wanted to buy a car. However, Thornton was unable to identify any specific vehicle which he (Thornton) wished to purchase, and had not made any appointments with any vehicle sellers.

  Furthermore, when asked why he (Thornton) would buy a car in California and drive it back to Memphis when gas was near \$4.00 per gallon, Thornton replied "that's how I do it."
- 18. Detective Moore then asked how Thornton obtained the \$80,000.00 and Thornton stated that he (Thornton) was a rapper and that the money was the remainder of the funds Thornton had earned from performing as a rapper at two clubs earlier in the month. Thornton claimed to have made \$34,000.00 from performing at the "Level 2" club in Memphis on February 13, 2011, and \$61,000.00 from performing at "Club Envy" on February 20, 2011.

- 1. "I'm in town and I can give u these for a better price
   than what I told you."
- 2. "Okay I can't wait . . . Hit me up when u get here."
- 3. "I have 13 og and 8 others that are very nice" 1
- 4. "Im tryin to leave town . . . When will u be here?"

  Detective DeRuyter showed the text messages to Thornton and told Thornton that he (Detective DeRuyter) believed that the messages referred to a marijuana transaction. Thornton admitted that the messages were about marijuana, but claimed that the numbers referred to grams, not pounds. Thornton also stated that he (Thornton) was in town to buy small quantities of marijuana, but that the majority of the money he (Thornton) was carrying was for the purchase of a car.
- 20. A trained narcotic detection canine, "Chip," was brought into the LASD office. Chip first searched the office without any money in it and did not alert to anything. The currency found in Thornton's carry-on bag was then hidden in the office and Chip gave a positive alert upon sniffing it,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The term "OG" is commonly used to refer to "OG Kush" which is marijuana from Afghanistan. In California, this type of marijuana can sell for up to and sometimes over \$5,000.00 per pound. Accordingly, if the 21 units referenced in the text messages referred to pounds and not grams, the transaction might total approximately \$105,000.00.

indicating that the money had been in recent proximity to a controlled substance.

- 21. The total amount of money found inside Thornton's carry-on bag and on Thornton's person was later counted and determined to be \$132,322.00 (i.e., the defendant currency). The amount of the bulk currency, its denominations (2-\$1 bills, 2-\$5 bills, 8-\$10 bills, 14-\$20 bills, 31-\$50 bills and 1,264-\$100 bills) and the manner in which it was secreted in Thornton's shoes are indicative of narcotics related proceeds.
- 22. A subsequent criminal history check revealed that in 2010 Thornton was arrested in Memphis, Tennessee for possession of marijuana, unlawful possession of a weapon, and possession of drug paraphernalia. The Shelby County Sheriff's report revealed that at the time of that arrest, Thornton was sitting in a vehicle with a digital scale in his lap. Thornton was also arrested and convicted for possession of marijuana in 2004.
- 23. Based on the above, plaintiff alleges that the defendant currency represents or is traceable to proceeds of illegal narcotics trafficking, or was intended to be used in one or more exchanges for a controlled substance or listed chemical, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841 et seq. The defendant currency is therefore subject to forfeiture pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6).

WHEREFORE, the United States prays that due process issue to enforce the forfeiture of the defendant currency, due notice be given to all interested parties to appear and show cause why forfeiture should be not be decreed, that this court decree forfeiture of the defendant currency to the United States of

America for disposition according to law, and for such other and further relief as this court may deem just and proper, together with the costs and disbursements of this action.

DATED: August // , 2011

Respectfully submitted,

ANDRÉ BIROTTE JR.
United States Attorney
ROBERT E. DUGDALE
Assistant United States Attorney
Chief, Criminal Division
STEVEN R. WELK
Assistant United States Attorney
Chief, Asset Forfeiture Section

JENNAFER M. RESNIK

Assistant United States Attorney Attorneys for Plaintiff United States of America VERIFICATION

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I, Michael D. Williams, hereby declare that:

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Currency.

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- I am a Special Agent with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and am the case agent for the forfeiture matter entitled United States v. \$132,322.00 in U.S.
- 2. I have read the above Verified Complaint for Forfeiture and know its contents. It is based upon my own personal knowledge and reports provided to me by other law enforcement agents.
- 3. Everything contained in the Complaint is true and correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed August  $10^{-7}$ , 2011 in Los Angeles, California.

Michael D. Williams

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# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

## NOTICE OF ASSIGNMENT TO UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE FOR DISCOVERY

This case has been assigned to District Judge Dolly Gee and the assigned discovery Magistrate Judge is Margaret A. Nagle.

The case number on all documents filed with the Court should read as follows:

CV11- 6596 DMG (MANx)

Pursuant to General Order 05-07 of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, the Magistrate Judge has been designated to hear discovery related motions.

| All discovery related motions should be noticed on the calendar of the Magistrate Judge |  |
|---|--|
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#### **NOTICE TO COUNSEL**

A copy of this notice must be served with the summons and complaint on all defendants (if a removal action is filed, a copy of this notice must be served on all plaintiffs).

Subsequent documents must be filed at the following location:

| Los Angeles, CA 90012 Santa Ana, CA 92701-45 | . 1-0 <b>:</b><br>16 |
|--|----------------------|
| Ganta Ana, GA 3270 1-43                      | 10                   |

Division Eastern Division
Fourth St., Rm. 1-053 3470 Twelfth St., Rm. 134
, CA 92701-4516 Riverside, CA 92501

Failure to file at the proper location will result in your documents being returned to you.

## Case 2:11-cv-06596-DMG-MAN Document 1 Filed 08/11/11 Page 11 of 15 Page ID #:21

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

|  |  |                            |  |   |   |  | > // // //  |  |  |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| I (a) PLAINTIFFS (Check b<br>UNITED STATES OF  | ox if you are representing yourse<br>AMERICA   | elf□)                      | .   1  | DEFENDANTS<br>\$132,322.00 IN U.S. CU   | RRENC   | ΥY   |   |  |  |
| (b) Attorneys (Firm Name, A yourself, provide same.)   | Address and Telephone Number.  Jennifer Resnik, Assistant United States A California Bar Number 233634 Federal Courthouse, 14th Floor, 312 Nort Los Angeles, California 90012 Telephone: (213) 894-384-6595, Facsim  | Attorney<br>th Spring Stre | eet  | Attorneys (If Known)  |   |  |   | *  | WELLOW STOCKED |
| II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION  | ON (Place an X in one box only )   |                            |  | HIP OF PRINCIPAL PAR  |   |  | es Only   |  |  |
| ☑ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff  | ☐ 3 Federal Question (U.S<br>Government Not a Par  |                            | Citizen of This St   | PT  | F DEF   | •  |   | PTF<br>□ 4   | DEF<br>□ 4   |
| □ 2 U.S. Government Defenda  | nt   | izenship                   | Citizen of Anothe  | r State 🗆 2   | 2 □ 2   | Incorporated an of Business in A   | d Principal Place<br>Another State  | □ 5  | □ 5  |
|  |  |                            | Citizen or Subject   | of a Foreign Country 🛛 3  | □ 3   | Foreign Nation   |   | □6   | □6   |
| IV. ORIGIN (Place an X in o  | ne box only.)  |                            |  |   |   |  |   |  |  |
| Volume 1 Original □ 2 Remove Proceeding State C  | ved from 3 Remanded from Court Appellate Court   |                            | instated or  | Transferred from another di   | strict (sp  | Dis  | trict Judg  | eal to E<br>e from<br>istrate  | L  |
| V. REQUESTED IN COMPI  | LAINT: JURY DEMAND:  | Yes 🗹                      | No (Check 'Yes' o  | only if demanded in compla  | int.)   |  |   |  |  |
| CLASS ACTION under F.R.O   | C.P. 23: □ Yes 🗹 No  |                            | □ M0   | ONEY DEMANDED IN C  | OMPL  | AINT: \$   |   |  |  |
| VI. CAUSE OF ACTION (Ci<br>21 U.S.C. § 881 (a)(6)  | te the U.S. Civil Statute under wh   | nich you a                 | ire filing and write   | a brief statement of cause.   | Do not o  | cite jurisdictional s  | tatutes unless dive   | ersity.)   |  |
| VII. NATURE OF SUIT (Pla   | ce an X in one box only.)  |                            |  |   |   |  |   |  |  |
| □ 891 Agricultural Act □ 892 Economic Stabilization Act □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 894 Energy Allocation Act □ 895 Freedom of Info. Act □ 900 Appeal of Fee Determination Under Equal Access to Justice | CONTRACT    110   Insurance   120   Marine   130   Miller Act   140   Negotiable Instrument   150   Recovery of   Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment   151   Medicare Act   152   Recovery of Defaulted Student Loan (Excl. Veterans)   153   Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits   160   Stockholders' Suits   190   Other Contract   195   Contract Product Liability   196   Franchise   REAL PROPERTY   210   Land Condemnation   220   Foreclosure   230   Rent Lease & Ejectment   240   Torts to Land   245   Tort Product Liability   290   All Other Real Property | 310                        | TORTS SONAL INJURY Airplane Airplane Product Liability Assault, Libel & Slander Fed. Employers' Liability Marine Marine Product Liability Motor Vehicle Motor Vehicle Motor Vehicle Product Liability Other Personal Injury Personal Injury Med Malpractice Personal Injury- Product Liability Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability MIGRATION Naturalization Application Habeas Corpus- Alien Detainee Other Immigration Actions | PERSONAL PROPERTY  370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability BANKRUPTCY 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 CIVIL RIGHTS 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/Accommodations 444 Welfare 445 American with Disabilities - Employment 446 American with Disabilities - Other 440 Other Civil Rights | □ 510 □ 530 □ 535 □ 540 □ 555 □ 610 □ 620 ■ 625 □ 630 □ 640 □ 650 □ 660 | Mandamus/ Other Civil Rights Prison Condition RFEITURE / PENALTY Agriculture Other Food & Drug Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 Liquor Laws R.R. & Truck Airline Regs Occupational Safety /Health Other | □ 710 Fair Lab □ 710 Fair Lab Act □ 720 Labor/M Relatior □ 730 Labor/M Reportir Disclost □ 740 Railway □ 790 Other La Litigatio □ 791 Empl. R. Security PROPERTY □ 820 Copyrigl □ 830 Patent □ 840 Tradema ■ SOCIAL SE □ 861 HIA (139 □ 862 Black La □ 863 DIWC/D □ (405(g)) □ 864 SSID Tit □ 865 RSI (405 FEDERAL TA □ 870 Taxes (U □ 871 IRS-Thin USC 760 | figmt.  Igmt.  Igmt.  Igmt.  Igmt.  Igward  Igmt.  Igward  Igmt.  Igward  Igwa | Act TS TY 3)   |
|  | Case Number:   | 11                         | 1-06   | 596   | . COV   |  |   |  | <del></del>  |
| AFTER CO   | OMPLETING THE FRONT SI   | սե ՕԲ Բ                    | OKM C V-/1, CO   | MPLETE THE INFORM   | A HON   | REQUESTED BI   | LLOW.   |  |  |

CV-71 (05/08)

## Case 2:11-cv-06596-DMG-MAN Document 1 Filed 08/11/11 Page 12 of 15 Page ID #:22

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

|  | IDENTICAL CASES: He st case number(s):  | las this action been  | previously filed in this court a                                  | and dismissed, remanded or closed? ☑ No ☐ Yes  | }                                       |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
|  | RELATED CASES: Ha   | ve any cases been p   | oreviously filed in this court th                                 | nat are related to the present case?   |   |
|  | Il boxes that apply) □ A □ B □ C  | . Arise from the sai<br>. Call for determina<br>. For other reasons                   | ation of the same or substantia<br>would entail substantial dupli | ons, happenings, or events; or ally related or similar questions of law and fact; or ication of labor if heard by different judges; or and one of the factors identified above in a, b or c also is present.   |   |
| IX. VEN                                    | UE: (When completing th   | ne following informa  | ation, use an additional sheet                                    | if necessary.)   |   |
| (a) List                                   | the County in this District<br>ck here if the government,   | ; California County its agencies or emp   | outside of this District; State ployees is a named plaintiff. I   | if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named plaintiff resides. f this box is checked, go to item (b).  |   |
| County                                     | in this District:*  |   |   | California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country  |   |
| Los Ang                                    | geles   |   |   |  |   |
| (b) List ☐ Chec                            | the County in this District   | ; California County   | outside of this District; State                                   | if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named defendant resides. If this box is checked, go to item (c).   | *************************************** |
| 1.11                                       | in this District:*  | its agencies or emp   | loyees is a named detendant.                                      | California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country  |   |
| Los An                                     |   |   |   | Cantonia ecuny castaco di ini sistile, viale, il cine ini cantonia, di cologii ecuny   |   |
| wather<br>Viri                             | 3   |   |   |  | /                                       |
|  |   |   | outside of this District; State                                   | if other than California, or Foreign Country, in which EACH claim arose.   |   |
|  | in this District:*  |   |   | California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country  |   |
| Los Ang                                    | eles  |   |   |  |   |
| Note: In la<br>X. SIGNA<br>Notic<br>or oth | and condemnation cases, un<br>ATURE OF ATTORNEY of<br>the to Counsel/Parties: The<br>the papers as required by la | se the location of the<br>(OR PRO PER)<br>the CV-71 (JS-44) Co<br>w. This form, appro | Civil Cover Sheet and the infortived by the Judicial Conference   | Transition contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings e of the United States in September 1974, is required pursuant to Local Rule 3-1 is not filed ting the civil docket sheet. (For more detailed instructions, see separate instructions sheet.) |   |
| Key to Sta                                 | itistical codes relating to So  | ocial Security Cases  | Y   |  |   |
| 110) 10 014                                | Nature of Suit Code   | Abbreviation  | Substantive Statement of  | Cause of Action  |   |
|  | 861   | HIA   |   | ance benefits (Medicare) under Title 18, Part A, of the Social Security Act, as amended spitals, skilled nursing facilities, etc., for certification as providers of services under the FF(b))   |   |
|  | 862   | BL  | All claims for "Black Lung (30 U.S.C. 923)                        | g" benefits under Title 4, Part B, of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969.   |   |
|  | 863   | DIWC  | -   | workers for disability insurance benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as led for child's insurance benefits based on disability. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))  |   |
|  | 863   | DIWW  | All claims filed for widows Act, as amended. (42 U.S.             | s or widowers insurance benefits based on disability under Title 2 of the Social Security C. 405(g))   |   |
|  | 864   | SSID  | All claims for supplementa<br>Act, as amended                     | I security income payments based upon disability filed under Title 16 of the Social Securit  | у                                       |
|  | 865   | RSI   | All claims for retirement (o                                      | ld age) and survivors benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42   |   |

CV-71 (05/08) CIVIL COVER SHEET Page 2 of 2

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10
    Attorneys for Plaintiff
11
    United States of America
12
                       UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
13
                  FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
14
                             WESTERN DIVISION
15
    UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
                                        CV
16
                                            11-06596 DM4 (MAHX)
              Plaintiff,
17
                                        NOTICE
              v.
18
    $132,322.00 IN U.S. CURRENCY,
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              Defendant.
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21
         In obedience to a Warrant of Arrest In Rem to me directed,
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    in the above-entitled cause, I have, on the ___ day of ___
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    2011, seized and taken into my possession, the following
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    described defendant, to wit: $132,322.00 in U.S. Currency, for
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   the cause set forth in the Complaint, to wit: violation of
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    federal laws, now pending in the United States District Court for
   the Central District of California, at Los Angeles, California.
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Amount demanded is the sum of \$-0-, plus interest and costs.

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I HEREBY GIVE NOTICE to any person who claims an interest in the above-described defendant that, pursuant to Rule G(5) of the Supplemental Rules for Admiralty or Maritime Claims and Asset Forfeiture Actions of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, said person must file with the Clerk of the United States District Court at Los Angeles, California and serve upon the attorney for the plaintiff, a verified Claim identifying the property claimed and his or her interest in the property not later than thirtyfive (35) days after the date of service of the Complaint, or within such additional time as the court may allow; that said person must file and serve an Answer within twenty-one (21) days after the filing of the verified Claim; that if notice was published but direct notice was not sent to said person or to said person's attorney, the Claim must be filed no later than sixty (60) days after the first day of publication on an official internet government forfeiture site or legal notice under Rule G(4)(a); and that all interested persons must file verified Claims and Answers within the time so fixed; otherwise, default may be entered and forfeiture ordered of the interest in the defendant of any person not so complying. Applications for intervention under Rule 24 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure by persons claiming maritime liens or other interests shall be filed within the time fixed by the court. A claim filed by a person asserting an interest as a bailee must identify the bailor, and if filed on the bailor's behalf must state the authority to do so.

Pursuant to General Order 10-07 of the United States

| 1  | District Court for the Central District of California, this   |
|----|---|
| 2  | action is subject to the Electronic Case Filing ("ECF") System.                                     |
| 3  | ECF User Registration Forms may be obtained from the Court.   |
| 4  | Please check <a href="http://www.forfeiture.gov">http://www.forfeiture.gov</a> for a listing of all |
| 5  | judicial forfeiture notices.  |
| 6  | Plaintiff's attorney is Assistant United States Attorney  |
| 7  | Jennifer Resnik, 312 North Spring Street, 14 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Los                               |
| 8  | Angeles, California 90012, (213)894-6595.   |
| 9  | The custodian of the defendant U. S. Currency is the United   |
| 10 | States Marshals Service, 255 East Temple Street, Suite 4128, Los                                    |
| 11 | Angeles, California 90012, (213) 894-7904.  |
| 12 |   |
| 13 | DATED: This day of, 2011.   |
| 14 |   |
| 15 | DAVID M. SINGER   |
| 16 | UNITED STATES MARSHAL   |
| 17 | U.S. MARSHAL REPRESENTATIVE   |
| 18 | U.S. MARSHAL REPRESENTATIVE   |
| 19 |   |
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